Opportunities and Action

Transforming Supports in Ontario For People Who Have a Developmental Disability

Executive Summary

Ministry of Community and Social Services

May 2006

Ontario

Introduction and Background

Introduction

The government of Ontario is committed to revitalizing social services and providing effective supports for vulnerable people in the province. In the 2004 Ontario Budget, the government announced the province would be transforming supports for people who have a developmental disability to create a coordinated system of community-based supports that is accessible, fair and sustainable. Part of this commitment includes working with stakeholders to develop a plan that results in more self-reliant individuals and families supported by coordinated information, planning and supports in their local communities.

One of the main principles underlying the transformation of developmental services is that people who have a developmental disability are people first. Enabling people to live in their communities as independently as possible and to participate as full citizens in all aspects of community life is the vision driving changes to the way individuals and their families or caregivers now get the services and supports they need.

A successful outcome of the transformation will be the extent to which people who have a developmental disability are recognized and valued as being part of the community.

Background

Since the government announced its commitment to transforming the developmental services system in 2004, the Ministry of Community and Social Services has met with individuals who have a developmental disability, their families and caregivers and various groups representing agencies that provide developmental services and supports from across the province. Their ideas and advice to the ministry play a critical part in the transformation and will help create a stronger system of services and supports that makes it possible for people who have a developmental disability and their caregivers to be self-reliant and live independently in the community with dignity and respect.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services has used the feedback it has received over the past year and a half to develop a plan for changing the way supports are provided to people who have a developmental disability. The strategies that make up this plan are outlined in our discussion paper, Opportunities and Action - Transforming Supports in Ontario for People Who Have a Developmental Disability.

As a springboard for further discussion and future policy development, the purpose of Opportunities and Action is twofold:

- The first goal of the paper is to stimulate a broad public discussion of the elements of the transformation plan and to provide an opportunity for anyone who has an interest in the process to participate by sharing their views and ideas about the proposed changes and how to implement them.

- The second goal is to introduce the new directions the ministry will be going in to deliver funding and supports to people who have a developmental disability based on what we have heard from our community partners, in particular individuals and families or caregivers of people who have a developmental disability.

Divided into two sections, the first part of Opportunities and Action - Transforming Supports in Ontario for People Who Have a Developmental Disability builds on the objectives of a transformed system. The goal is to create a fair, accessible and sustainable system in which:

- People with similar needs in similar circumstances receive similar supports across the province

- Funding and supports are more flexible and individually tailored so that people who have a developmental disability and their families/ caregivers can make decisions about the supports they receive either by purchasing what they need directly from service providers, using existing agency programs or a combination of both

- Access to a broader range of supports, including specialized services for people who have a developmental disability and mental health issues and/or challenging behaviour, is more streamlined and consistent across the province and

- Clearer roles of individuals, families/caregivers, agencies and the government, on the one hand, and better information about support needs, on the other, contribute to greater stability in the system over the long term.

A New Vision for Developmental Services

Most people who have a developmental disability live in the community in a variety of settings. Some live with their parents or relatives, others live in group homes and some live in their own home or apartment with varying degrees of support.

However, living in the community does not necessarily mean a person is fully accepted or seen as a member of that community. Government needs to support individuals who have a developmental disability and their families in their efforts to participate fully as citizens.

To help people realize their potential and promote greater inclusion, the future course of developmental services in Ontario is based on six underlying principles:

1. **Citizenship** – supports for people who have a developmental disability promote self-determination and participation in all aspects of community life.
2. **Fairness and equity** – supports are equitable and people with similar situations receive similar supports across the province.
3. **Accessibility and portability** – funding and supports are flexible and go with the person if he/she moves to another community.
4. **Safety and security** – supports are designed to balance appropriate supervision, especially for those who are most at risk, with the right to self-determination, privacy and confidentiality.
5. **Accountability** – service delivery will include mechanisms to hold service providers accountable to the people using their services and the ministry for the quality and outcome of the supports they offer.
6. **Sustainability** – funding and supports are based on assessed needs and available resources in the context of a long-range plan for the developmental services system.

To meet these objectives, the ministry's strategy to transform the developmental services sector focuses on the key issues people have identified as areas of concern to them, from social attitudes that make it difficult for people with a developmental disability to belong and participate as full members of their communities to more flexible funding arrangements that give people greater choice in the supports they use and where they get them.

To make sure the ministry gets the transformation right, we are seeking your ideas and advice on a number of issues and possible policy directions. We have prepared a list of questions about the most effective ways to develop and provide supports for people who have a developmental disability and their families/ caregivers in the following areas:

- Promoting inclusion and community engagement
- Improving respite supports for caregivers
- Developing housing options that encourage creative and innovative alternatives
- Providing supports for young adults when they leave school
- Assisting older adults to access supports for seniors
- Establishing specialized services to support people with specialized needs
- Making effective use of the tax system and wills and trusts to help families plan for the future care of their family member and
- Promoting quality supports.

These topics are discussed in greater detail in Section 1 of Opportunities and Action - Transforming Supports in Ontario for People Who Have a Developmental Disability.

Extensive consultation with individuals, families, service providers and provincial organizations and other activities that have taken place over the past 18 months have also shown us that several strategic changes are needed in a number of other areas to achieve the objectives of fairness, accessibility and sustainability. Part 2 of Opportunities and Action - Transforming Supports in Ontario for People Who Have a Developmental Disability outlines the ministry's plan for changes to the current system of developmental services and supports, including:

- Funding personal plans that identify individual goals and areas such as living arrangements where supports may be needed and developing a network of independent planners/ service brokers for those who want this type of help
- Clarifying who is eligible for ministry-funded developmental services and supports based on recommendations from experts in the field of developmental disability that will help determine fair and consistent eligibility criteria
- Introducing a standardized provincial application that determines individuals' strengths and needs so that access to available funding and supports is fair, equitable and people with similar needs receive comparable supports regardless of where they live
- Streamlining the process to get supports through a single point of access that makes it easier for individuals and their families/ caregivers to navigate the system and build a service and support plan that meets their needs and
- Increasing choices in the way people who have a disability and their families/caregivers receive supports by making direct funding available to those who want a greater say and more active role in how services are provided and by whom.

For more detailed information about the ministry's plan for systems transformation, see Section 2 of Opportunities and Action - Transforming Supports in Ontario for People who have a Developmental Disability.

Next Steps

Individuals, families and services providers have always played a central role in shaping developmental services in Ontario. We want to make sure that we continue to hear your views and ideas as we work together to transform the sector.

If you would like to read the complete version of this paper and the accompanying discussion questions please visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services' website at

www.mcss.gov.on.ca
and click on

"Transforming Developmental Services"

The ministry has arranged several methods for people to provide their input and contribute their ideas about this paper:

- You may e-mail your comments to:

dstransformation.mcss@css.gov.on.ca

- OR you may mail your comments to:

Developmental Services Transformation Feedback
Developmental Services Branch
Ministry of Community and Social Services
4th Floor, 80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1E9

- OR you may fax your comments to:

(416) 325-5554 or toll free to 1-866-340-9112

To obtain further information on providing your comments, you may also phone:

(416) 327-4954 or toll-free 1-866-340-8881

The feedback the ministry receives will be carefully reviewed for similar themes and ideas. The information you provide will inform the next step of the process, which is the final policy development leading to the transformation of the sector.

Important: Please note the ministry anticipates a large volume of responses to this discussion paper and it will not be possible to send an individual letter responding specifically to your comments. We realize Opportunities and Action - Transforming Supports in Ontario for People Who Have a Developmental Disability is a large document and appreciate the time taken to provide your input. We welcome your comments on any or all of the questions.

Please submit your response by June 30, 2006

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